

Formed without form, the features of all faces
 Blurred out of love, acquire once more
 The traits of an original innocence;
 And this is so because in the third Heaven
 The soul, reborn in the new Adam,
 No longer sins in thought or deed.

93 THE LAMENT OF THE VIRGIN

Lady, Queen of Heaven, they have taken your son;
 Hurry, come and see—they're beating Him,
 Whipping Him brutally; they will kill Him.

How can this be? My son, who has done no wrong,
 My hope—how could they have taken Him?

Judas betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver;
 For him, a good business deal.

Magdalene, help! Help me—Oh, the anguish!
 They have taken him prisoner, just as I was told.

Lady, Queen of Heaven, come rescue Him,
 Quick, they're spitting on Him;
 Now they're taking Him before Pilate.

Pilate, I beseech you, do Him no harm;
 I can show you that those who accuse Him lie.

Crucify Him, crucify Him! According to our law
 He who claims to be king must be punished.

Listen to me, I beg of you, look at me.
 Have you ever seen any suffering like mine?
 Will you not be moved to pity?

Bring out two thieves to be His companions;
 Crown the pretender, crown Him with thorns!

My Son, my Son, my Son, my loving lily,
 Who can console me in my anguish?
 Son whose gentle eyes once smiled on me,
 Why do you not answer me?
 Why hide from the mother who nursed You?

Lady, here is the cross
 On which they will raise
 The true Light of the world.

O cross, will you take my son from me?
 And what will you accuse Him of,
 Since he has done no wrong?

Hurry, O sorrowful one,
 They're stripping your son;
 They will nail Him to the cross.

If they have stripped Him of His garments,
 Let me then see His bloody wounds!

Lady, they've taken one of His hands,
 Pressed it against the cross,
 And the nail has ripped through the flesh.
 They've taken the other hand,
 Stretched it out on the cross,
 And the pain spreads and grows.
 Lady, they've taken His feet
 And nailed them to the tree;
 They have broken all His bones and joints.

Oh, let me begin to chant the dirge,
 My son has been taken from me.
 O Son, my fair Son,
 Who was it that killed You?
 Oh, that they had ripped out my heart,
 That I might not see Your torn flesh
 Hanging from the cross!

JACOPONE DA TODI

Mother, why have you come?
Your agony and tears crush Me;
To see you suffer so will be My death.

My anguish is not without cause;
O my Son, Father and Spouse,
Who was it wounded and stripped You?

Mother, weep no more; stay and help
Those dear to Me, the friends I leave behind.

Son, do not ask this of me; let me die with You.
Let me breathe my last here at Your side.
A common grave for son and mother,
Since ours is a common agony.

Mother, My heart in tears, I commend you into the hands
Of John, My chosen one; call him your son.
John, here is My mother, take her with love;
Have pity on her, they have pierced her heart.

My Son, You have breathed Your last;
Son of a mother frightened and dazed,
Son of a mother destroyed by grief,
Tortured, tormented Son!
Son without peer, fair and rosy-cheeked,
To whom shall I turn now that You have left me?
Why did the world so despise You?
Gentle and sweet Son, Son of a sorrowful mother,
How cruelly You have been treated!
John, my new son, your brother is dead:
The sword they prophesied has pierced my heart.
They have killed both mother and son,
One cruel death for both,
Embracing each other and their common cross!

Bibliography

Since most of the works on the life and poetry of Jacopone da Todi are in Italian and not translated, it has been thought best to limit the bibliography to essentials. Readers with a knowledge of Italian, French, and German will find an excellent and very up-to-date bibliography in George T. Peck's *The Fool of God—Jacopone da Todi* (University of Alabama Press, 1980).

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